

# From Farm to Table

## The Role of Immigrants in Nashville's Food Industry



**A**s Nashville's population has boomed in recent years, much of the growth has been led by the arrival of newcomers from around the world. A 2014 report from New American Economy found that immigrants accounted for nearly 60% of Nashville's population growth between 2000 and 2012.

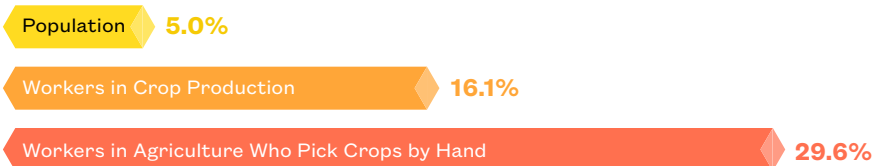
Less well-known is the outsize role that immigrants play in Nashville's enviable food and restaurant industry. From farm to table, immigrants are involved in nearly every aspect of the business. As entrepreneurs, they have also significantly expanded the global food offerings around the city, as evidenced by the long and growing list of participating restaurants in the annual InterNASHional Food Crawl, hosted by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC).

### TENNESSEE'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Although they make up just **5%** of Tennessee's population, immigrants play a significant role in the production of food across the state of Tennessee. They are **nearly 1 in 7** of the state's farmworkers. They represent **16.1%** of workers in crop production and **29.6%** of workers in agriculture jobs that involve picking crops by hand.

Nearly  
**1 in 7**  
farmworkers in Tennessee  
are foreign-born.

#### Immigrant shares of the...



### NASHVILLE'S FOOD AND RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

At just **7.8%** of Nashville's population, immigrants punch far above their weight in the local food and restaurant industry. As business owners and employees, immigrants represent **16.2%** of the food and restaurant industry overall, including:



**NASHVILLE'S FOOD AND RESTAURANT INDUSTRY CONT.**

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As workers, immigrants represent:

**24.9%**  
of chefs and cooks

**20.1%**  
of food prep workers

**16.5%**  
of restaurant managers

**8.2%**  
of cashiers

**7.5%**  
of waiters and waitresses

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According to the most recent Survey of Business Owners (SBO):

Minority-owned restaurants and hotels employ more than **10,000** Nashvillians and generate more than **\$671.4 million** in sales each year. Asian-owned hotels and restaurants employ **5,855** Nashvillians and generate more than **\$409.7 million** in sales each year, and Hispanic-owned hotels and restaurants employ **2,744** Nashvillians and generate more than **\$143.4 million** in sales each year.

<b>Restaurants and Hotels</b>	<b>Nashvillians Employed</b>	<b>Annual Sales Generated</b>
Minority-Owned	More than 10,000	<b>\$671.4M</b>
— Asian-Owned	5,855	<b>\$409.7M</b>
— Hispanic-Owned	2,744	<b>\$143.4M</b>